DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 010 TM 029 723

AUTHOR Bass, Elizabeth; Anderson-Patton, Vicky; Rayer, Liz; Baney, Mary Ellen

TITLE A Collaborative Analysis of Doctoral Self-Study Research.

PUB DATE 1999-04-00

NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Cooperation; Doctoral Degrees; Doctoral Programs; *Graduate Students; Graduate Study; Higher Education; *Mentors; *Research Methodology; *Self Evaluation (Individuals)

IDENTIFIERS *Reflective Practice

ABSTRACT

After individual members completed self-study dissertations, a collaborative of four researchers examined their self-study experiences and formulated a narrative methodological framework and a system of mentoring novices in self-study practices. The first section of this paper focuses on the implicit connection between self-study and narrative methodology. Self-study is conceptualized as a rigorous and vigorous methodology that is capable of producing personal and professional transformation. The second section discusses mentoring doctoral self-study work. Intensive self-study provides for authentic learning, self-development, reflection, insight, connection with others, real-world relevance, and practical application. Self-study is fundamental for authentic professional development and personal growth. (Contains 3 figures and 29 references.) (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 430 010

A Collaborative Analysis

Of Doctoral Self-Study Research

Elisabeth Bass, Camden County College

Vicky Anderson-Patton, West Chester University

Liz Rayer, St. Joseph's University

Mary Ellen Baney, Florence V. Evans Elementary School

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Elizabeth Bass
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

TM029723

Presented at a New Member Poster Session of the S-STEP SIG of AERA
(April, 1999: Montreal, Canada)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

Self-study methodology is ready to move beyond teacher education. After completing four self-study dissertations, our research collective spent a year examining our experience of self-study. This paper theorizes a narrative methodological framework and a system of mentoring novices into self-study practices that we believe will help self-study become more broadly utilized.[1]

During the spring semester 1997, four students, Lis, Liz, Mary Ellen, and Vicky, met as a classroom collaborative to develop their dissertation proposals. We had chosen the same dissertation chair and qualitative research methods, specifically narrative inquiry. Our chair formed the collaborative to help get our proposals written and approved by the newly formed university oversight committee (The Proposal Review Committee). We recognized that the narrative and qualitative methodologies we sought to do were not common in Temple University's College of Education.

After that semester, we became a dissertation support group from May 1997 to April 1998. This collaborative was significant in our experience of the process and the completion of our dissertations. The group facilitated progress throughout by assigning tasks and deadlines, providing feedback and suggestions to help overcome blocks in the research process, discussing and reflecting on the research process, and providing an emotional support network. We received our doctorates[2] in May 1998.

---

[1] This paper was presented as a poster session at AERA, April 1999: Montreal, Canada. Following the text are two mind maps and a drawing that were part of the presentation.

[2] The four dissertations were chaired by Dr. Jerry Allender, Temple University.
Anderson -Patton, V. (1998). Creative catalysts: A study of creative teachers from their own perspectives and experiences. (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1998). Dissertation Abstracts International, 59/06, 1980.
Baney, M.E. (1998) An examination of the process of implementing multiple intelligences theory into classroom practice: A team approach. (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1998). Dissertation Abstracts International, 59/06, 1900.

In July 1998, we decided to continue working together as a research collaborative.[3] We began to examine, reflectively and collaboratively, our self-study dissertation processes. As a post-doctoral research collective, we wanted to gain insight into the practice of self-study. Our understanding of self-study came from two books: Reconceptualizing Teaching Practice (Hamilton, 1998) and Teachers Who Teach Teachers: Reflections on Teacher Education (Russell & Korthagen, 1995); two S-STEP conference proceedings: Conversations in Community (Cole & Finley, 1998) and Empowering Our Future in Teacher Education (1996), and various papers presented by the S-STEP SIG of AERA.

We are committed to the ideas of self-study research, that it is collaborative, participative, and reflective (Loughran & Northfield, 1998; Lomax & Parker, 1998). It is a "study of one's self, one's action, and one's ideas....[in combination with a study of] texts read, experiences had, people known, and ideas considered" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998, p. 236). The goal of our research collective was "to make a contribution to educational knowledge through [Whitehead's] living theory approach which emphasizes the contribution of practitioners who make their own process of education transparent" (Lomax & Parker, 1998, p. 2).

As a starting point, we wrote narratives that focused on critical incidents of our experience with the dissertation process. According to Richardson (1994), "writing is a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic. It is a way of

---

Bass, E. (1998). A narrative analysis of a transformative pedagogy's impact on academic literacy. (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1998). Dissertation Abstracts International, 59/06, 1880.
Rayer, E. (1998). Organizational socialization: The transition from college to work. (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1998). Dissertation Abstracts International, 59/06, 1924.

[3] Mary Ellen Baney is a fifth grade teacher at Florence V. Evans Elementary School, New Jersey. Lis Bass is chair of the Academic Skills Department at Camden County College, New Jersey. Vicky Anderson-

'knowing' —a method of discovery and analysis" (p. 516). From these initial writings, we focused on emerging themes and topics for further investigation (Huberman & Miles, 1994). We held a series of regularly scheduled meetings, wrote several short narratives, read self-study materials, and held discussions with our dissertation chair. The group dealt with issues of group process, gender, narrative, mentoring, Gestalt Theory, and self-study[4]. Four themes became the focus of our discussions: utilizing narrative for self-study, mentoring doctoral students, collaboration and self-study, and the psychodynamics of self-study. This paper focuses on two of these areas, narrative and mentoring, wherein the group was most ready to articulate our findings.

In the first section, this paper focuses on the implicit connection we discovered between self-study and narrative methodology. An argument is presented for the utilization of narrative in self-study. The discussion centers on the following: that narrative gives access to process, not just outcomes; that creating narratives requires a dynamic relationship between researcher and participants that honors the complexity of the participants; and that narrative includes our researcher voices in the process. In the second section, the paper discusses the particularities of mentoring doctoral self-study work. We conclude that traditional advising is not sufficient. To successfully guide a doctoral student through self-study research, the mentor must balance task and interpersonal issues. In addition to discussions of narrative and mentoring, threaded throughout the paper are our beliefs that self-study is both a rigorous and vigorous research methodology, capable of producing personal and professional transformation.

Patton is a full-time adjunct professor of Elementary Education at West Chester University, Pennsylvania. Liz Rayer is Assistant Director of Career Services at St. Joseph's University, Pennsylvania.

[4] Quotes from this data and minutes from our meetings will be noted in brackets throughout the text of this paper.

Narrative and Self-Study Research

> If we wish to understand the deepest and most universal of human experiences, if we wish our work to be faithful to the lived experiences of people, if we wish for a union with poetics and science, or if we wish to use our privileges and skills to empower the people we study, then we should value the narrative. (Richardson, 1997, p.35).

Each of us wanted to tell the stories of our research participants, and in doing so to shed light on issues we were grappling with in our professional lives. Our research questions led us to narrative and self-study methodologies as we strove to give voice to our research participants and not further marginalize them.[5] We desired to engage in work that was meaningful for both the participants and ourselves as researchers, and hopefully for other educators who may later come to read our work. In order to do this work, we came to our dissertations knowing that we needed to utilize a narrative research methodology.

Our dissertations used narrative inquiry and self-study methodologies to address our guiding research questions. These questions centered on the psychodynamics of education, the inner processes of students, teachers, and ourselves. Our research experiences and findings led us to suggest that narrative gives the researcher access to the process, not just the outcomes. This is consistent with Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) assertion that "knowing is experiential rather than conceptual and they (researchers) use narrative to reveal teachers knowing" as pointed out by Hamilton & Pinnegar (1998, p.

[5] A marginalized person refers to someone on the margins of power. This typically is the result of an interaction of class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

237). More specifically, Mary Ellen wanted to go beyond the current research that described schools with Multiple Intelligences Theory already in place, to focus on the process of getting a group of teachers to incorporate this curricular transformation. As Patton (1990) suggests, quantitative methods result in a snapshot perspective of a process and do not capture the non-linear aspects of a developmental process. This developmental process was also key for Liz, who as a college career counselor wanted to examine what happens to college students during their transition from college to corporate culture.

Laurel Richardson (1997) wrote of the power of narratives—"It is the way individuals understand their own lives and best understand the lives of others" (p.30). Vicky, in examining creativity, was looking to understand both the uniqueness and similarities in experiences and perspectives of college teachers identified as creative by students and colleagues. Lis wanted to understand her transformative curriculum from inside her marginalized students' lives. As Chinua Achebe, a twentieth century Nigerian writer, claims in "The Truth of Fiction," "imaginative identification is the opposite of indifference; it is human connectedness in its most intimate" (1990, p. 151). His claim is that art, in particular the art of storytelling, allows humans to bridge difference. Narrative provides the stories by which we may come, through our imaginations and our intellect, to understand others and perhaps even ourselves. Narrative embodies creativity, allowing researchers and participants to authentically express their stories and make connections.

Narrative and Postmodernism

Feminism, anti-racism, and other liberatory movements have been part of the wave of postmodernism that rejects positivistic notions of reality. According to Richardson (1997), "the implicit liberation narrative is consistent with liberation movements. Social scientists thus have the opportunity consciously to stage their research within guiding narratives that empower those whom they study" (p.34). When a student pleaded with Lis that "she doesn't want to be a statistic," it is not simply a case of innumeracy. Traditional experimental designs have colonized those being studied and produced results that maintain hierarchical relationships (Brodkey, 1992; Richardson, 1997). Traditional methodologies are consistent with the conception of a measurable objective reality. "The logico-scientific mode looks for universal truth conditions whereas the narrative mode looks for particular connections between events" (Richardson, 1997, p.28). Narrative inquiry is a fluid research process compared to traditional methodology that is static.

All of us chose to do our studies on groups undervalued by mainstream society: elementary school teachers (Mary Ellen), marginalized students (Lis), college career counselors (Liz), and creative teachers (Vicky). We felt compelled to give voice to these populations and to ourselves. Narrative gives voice because it provides a counter-narrative, in Laurel Richardson's (1997) sense—a way for individuals and groups who are not represented by the dominant narrative to write their reality.

One of the excesses of positivist science was the belief that knowledge was disembodied and as such more powerful/true than embodied knowledge, than bodies. However, people felt a loss of voice—of identity, of power, of self. Particularly as

women approaching the world of academic research, we were attracted to narrative because we felt it would allow us to do authentic research. This meant the research had to be meaningful to us. Self-study purported that we could examine our work and use the results for personal and professional growth. Narrative allowed us to do this work within the context of our lives. We believe that we changed, grew, transformed, because narrative included our "selves" in the creative process of doing the research. This is more than simple reflection. Narrative allows us do women's work—connecting, collaborating, nurturing, and trying to make a difference. Rather than having our identity submerged into traditional research methods, we could openly allow ourselves voice.

Narrative clearly claims that knowledge is constructed, that it is situated in multiple contexts and has multiple perspectives. There is no one true way to tell a story. The discomfort this uncertainty produces is assuaged by our felt belief that this reflects lived reality. Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) stated that "the work of self-study acknowledges that (uncertainty) and rejoices in the uncertainty of the current world. More than a qualitative approach to a situation, self-study scholars attempt to embrace that uncertainty and reject calls for validity and reliability as they are traditionally known" (p. 235). We know there are multiple perspectives and that knowledge is value-laden, because we, particularly as women, have experienced the repercussions of objective science.

Conversely, we have experienced the power of stories. Robert Coles (1989) in The Call of Stories suggests what every student of literature knows, that stories contain the great lessons of humanity. For the four women involved in our research collective,

integrating the stories of our personal lives with the stories of our academic lives was an empowering move. And writing the stories of our participants empowered them as well.

Narrative and Research Participants

Part of our personal worldview made it critical for us to engage in research that provided a different relationship with the participants of our study than traditional methods. In order to successfully create narratives, the researcher and participant form a dynamic relationship. The data collection for narrative was a meaningful process for both the researchers and the participants. There is an intimacy created when we wish to understand a [deeper awareness of who they, and we are, in the world] (Vicky).

Narrative honors the complexity of the participants and enables their stories to emerge in various contexts. Our methods of dissertation data collection included keeping journals, engaging in discussions, and having team meetings—valuable modes for reflection whether one is engaged in research or not. In our experience journalling became a therapeutic intervention wherein reflection was taken to another, a metacognitive, level.

For some of our participants, being in the study created the space to reflect that they would not have found otherwise, but which they did find valuable. Both the research participants and authors expressed some personal insight and growth through the data collection and dissertation process. These outcomes resonate with Korb, Gorrell and Van de Riet's (1989) idea that self-concepts change through "evaluations from culture and family, influential feedback and encouragement from significant others, comparison

with others and success experiences" (p.30). When writing the narratives, we found that all these conditions became part of the story.

Participants are able to "check" narratives in ways they could not if the data were in a more mathematical or abstract form. Our participants described this process as a validating experience. The researchers felt closer to the participants and the participants' felt empowered, honored, and valued. [My students were so excited to read 'their' stories at the end of the semester] (Lis). Unlike traditional research where participants most often end their relationship with the researcher after the research, our participants' experienced a positive afterlife with the researchers following the studies' conclusions. [My students are coming up to me and filling me in on their stories since the research. We have this connection that continues] (Liz). [My participants enjoyed the chance to reflect on their creativity personally and professionally. I've continued to be in contact with five of the six teachers and would feel comfortable contacting the sixth should a reason arise] (Vicky). [I still meet regularly with these teachers. A year later, we continue to implement Multiple Intelligences Theory in a collaborative way as evidenced in our Professional Improvement Plans. We're all still working with the concepts and in some ways integrating them into our classrooms in a more sophisticated fashion now] (Mary Ellen).

Gathering data for narratives was time consuming for both the researcher and the participants. Early in the research, Liz lost a participant because of the time requirements. We discovered, however, that the relationships provided the impetus for continued interaction for the rest of our participants. The participants also valued the metacognitive results that tend not to occur in traditional quantitative research. Their

reflection, which continued over a period of time in a collaborative context, was appreciated by the researcher and mirrored back to them in the narratives, thus valuing their work.

Narrative and Self

Korb et al. (1989) note that psychological theories concerning the feeling of "rightness" in one's expressions and experiences strengthen an individual's sense of self. Certainly each woman in our dissertation support group felt a sense of rightness in the narrative study she was conducting despite the concomitant feelings of discomfort. On reflection, our processes were indeed important identification experiences as we moved through our novitiate journeys as qualitative researchers.

Writing narrative is a process fraught with personal vulnerability. We were not sure how to write the narratives, how to include our voice, if we could avoid colonizing our participants' voices, what the limitations of research storytelling were, and what the reception to our work would be from the academy. While the few models of research narratives our group found were useful to guide us in our work[6], ultimately, the form for our writing had to emerge from the context of our work. Our research support group provided an audience to experiment with forms for the narratives. For us, writing narratives was an additional act of vulnerability given the context of dissertation work. The self-study collaborative helped to negotiate these vulnerabilities, but in the end, we succeeded in creating a feeling of "rightness" for our voice as researchers to emerge.

[6] Some notable research narratives include Coles, R. (1967, 1971a, 1971b, 1977b, 1978, 1980). Children of crisis , I through V and Women of crisis I and II. Boston: Little Brown; Duneier, M. (1992). Slim's table: Race, responsibility, and masculinity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; and Wolf, M. (1992). A thrice told tale. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

According to Cortazzi (1993), "the teacher's voice may emerge at its strongest in teachers' narrative accounts" (p. 11). His only problem was "how to find an adequate method to gather and analyze teachers' narratives in ways which are reasonably valid from the research point of view" (p. 12). Based on our research experiences, we found that the combination of self-study and narrative methodologies created an "adequate method" to articulate our educator voices.

Narrative "allows us to contemplate the effects of our actions and to alter the directions of our lives" (Richardson, 1997, p. 27). [Writing the narrative dissertation allowed me to reconnect with my voice and my creative self, making it public through sharing my work with the participants, the research support group, and the readers of my dissertation was part of real transformation for me] (Vicky). This collective did not want dissertations that would sit on shelves. [The dissertation process not only gave me more confidence in my voice, but more confidence in my students' voices so that now as I chair the department, I can train teachers to listen more deeply] (Lis). Each of us was able to identify how the formalized reflection on our practice that formed our dissertation work transformed us, changed us, and helped us to grow professionally and personally.

Mentoring Self-Study Dissertations

An examination of mentoring within the context of our self-study doctoral dissertation process yielded a description of practices suited to self-study and, in particular, female students. As students engaged in women's work, we sought meaningful connections between the research and our lives, as well as dynamic relationships with participants that nurtured and empowered others and ourselves. Within

this context, mentors need to be more than advisors. They need to provide more than the novitiate guidance into a career that researchers describe as the typically desirable relationship between a dissertation chair and graduate students (Adams, 1992; Baird, 1997; Gaffney, 1995; Manthei, 1992; Valadez & Duran, 1991).

Traditional advising is not sufficient. We believe that mentoring self-studies involves an educative relation (Lomax, 1998). Lomax explains:

> educative relations....happen through intentional, committed, responsible action that enriches awareness for all parties in the relationship....one in which all parties to the relation seek to enhance the awareness and connectedness of each other (p. 9).

In our experience, self-study mentoring is an educative relation that requires a trusted relationship, shared educational beliefs, an androgynous advising style (Heinrich, 1991) and structured three-tiered collaboration. Our discussion focuses on the positive attributes of mentoring that we see as instrumental to a successful self-study doctoral dissertation process.

Initially, what drew our dissertation group to our mentor was the sense of an affirming relationship and a shared attitude toward learning. All four of us enjoyed his teaching methods, which developed trust, involved collaboration, were student-centered, and were creative. In the context of an education course, a teacher who "walks the talk" is notably seen as trustworthy. The fact that we were drawn to a mentor based on a particular style of teaching is not surprising. A. G. Shannon suggests in "Research Degree Supervision: More Mentor than Master" (1995), "Supervision...involves teaching: teaching of a special sort" (p. 14).

As students coming to our doctoral work with years of educational experiences and personal requirements, we welcomed a mentor who was willing to meet us where we were, to hear our voice, and to make a connection with our work. Our mentor's educational theory included the goal of [learning to embrace whatever a student brings] (Jerry). For Vicky, previous negative educational experiences made her wary of working with an advisor who might hold his or her research agenda above the students'. Vicky had dropped out of dissertation work with an advisor whose style of mentorship had enervated her by removing her voice from the work. Instead of having his own agenda, our mentor emphasized the study of a topic that was figural in our lives. Mary Ellen and Lis were committed to their students, which meant that meaningful work had to be directly applicable to the classroom. Additionally, our mentor's understanding that implicit in learning is the goal of personal development supported our belief that we should do meaningful, relevant work. Liz's strong quantitative background belied her interest in expanding her ability to do qualitative work, but he was able to support her desire to "stretch." Lis brought cynicism from negative experiences and having two graduate programs close on her. Embracing what we brought to the process did not necessarily mean our mentor agreed with it, but he sought ways to support us so we could accomplish our work.

In traditional academia, students are told what to do and how to do it. Students are assigned topics, told which areas of research are reasonable, provided with methodological models, and then required to conform to prescribed writing frameworks. Additionally, students are warned against getting emotionally involved in their research studies. In direct contrast, researchers engaged in self-study utilize an emergent research

design. A significant part of the process of self-study is figuring out the research questions, the methodology, and the forms for representation that work best for the study and the researcher. Having a mentor who provides answers, is directive or authoritative, would undermine the self-study. The process of addressing these research issues and letting ourselves use our emotional involvement, "to recognize 'human feeling' as an aid to understanding," (Lomax, 1998, p. 10) puts us on the edge of discomfort, but we know that we develop more as people, researchers, and teachers, if we are fully identified with our work.

Active mentoring was a significant anchor for us as we participated in this process. Our mentor drew on his experiences with psychology and education to dig in at areas of tension, disappointment, defensiveness, or confusion—a very different dynamic than taking control. His openness to the process built trust and allowed us the opportunity to create our own "living educational theories" (Whitehead, 1993). Our mentor's living educational theory, his advising style, and, in particular, his interest in self-study, guided him in this process.

Our mentor was able to effectively balance task and interpersonal dynamics during the involved process of guiding self-study research. According to Heinrich (1991), this balance typifies an androgynous mentor. When she examined 52 doctoral chair/graduate student relationships, Heinrich classified them using gender characteristics. She found that masculine advisors were overly task-oriented, using power in their own interest. On the other hand, feminine advisors were overly interpersonal and did not own their power. Only advisors exhibiting an androgynous advising style, whether described as father/daughter or collegial relationships, used their

power in the advisee's interest. The graduate students called such advisors mentors. Additionally, masculine mentoring does not allow for personal disclosure, while a feminine style leaves such disclosure unfinished, unable to move it toward task. We felt we benefited from our mentor's experience with both psychological and educational processes. In our collaborative analysis, we discovered that therapeutic learning was intertwined with authentic learning. Thus, we believe that self-study mentoring is best when it can facilitate these processes.

Given that "self" is key in self-study, a successful mentor needs to be adept at intrapersonal and interpersonal issues. Finding a topic to which we would be committed for the years that doctoral research requires involved delving into one's person. The members of our support group recall the way in which our mentor actively listened to our searching for what was personally significant in our teaching and intellectual worlds. Throughout the process, our mentor was constantly aware of how the work touched the whole fabric of our lives. His support allowed us to balance task and interpersonal issues to get the work done by using our life circumstances as the "trump card" in our research. Ignoring personal issues blocks work; embracing these issues moved us forward.

Mentoring that catalyzes students to do work in their personal lives allows the dissertation to get done. Additionally, learning to use the context of our lives deepened our ability to do self-study. This is not therapy in the traditional sense, and the particulars of our lives were not central to the discussion. However, the value of seeing ourselves as researchers with real, relevant work to do, pushed us to create the space required to get the work done. Dealing with our personal issues so that we could live up to the image

and reality of ourselves as researchers released psychic energy for the task. Ultimately, the personal work was the underpinning of transformative learning.

To avoid solipsistic error, and congruent with the value of relationship, self-study work calls for a higher degree of collaboration than traditional dissertations. Loughran and Northfield (1998) argue that "if self-study is to lead to genuine reframing (Schon, 1983) of a situation so that learning and understanding through reflection might be enhanced, then the self in self-study cannot be solely individual" (p. 7). The collaborative aspects of self-study research have led to the emergence of critical friends who provide honest and open feedback. To have this, an educative relations, we believe the collaboration must be firmly grounded in authentic relationships. An authentic relationship does not mean only interpersonal maintenance, but also that the collective serves to value work. Mentoring facilitates collaborative work in a variety of ways.

As a result of our experiences in this dissertation support group, we believe that successful self-study involves three tiers of collaboration: mentor/student researcher; participants/student researcher; and student researcher/student researcher. The mentor's role here is key. Our mentor insured that all three layers of collaboration were primary in our research design and process. He continuously supported the importance of each collaborative relationship from the development of topic, through the research, and into the final representation. He also served as a model for collaborating effectively.

The first collaborative dynamic is between the mentor and student. This includes a willingness on the part of the mentor to let the student set the research agenda. Our mentor pushed us to find topics that were meaningful to us through active listening and the development of small doable writing projects.

Due to the intensely personal nature of self-study, at times our dissertation work made us feel particularly vulnerable. Significantly, our mentor functioned as the first authoritative audience. Since criticizing self-study felt like a criticism of one's self, we appreciated when our mentor judged the work by whether the text communicated both the thoughts and feelings well, and whether it worked for us. This type of feedback is radically different than having an authority help with the frustration involved in statistical analysis of data. For Liz, narrative was so different from her experiences with quantitative work that she felt as if she was trying to speak a new language. Support from the mentor that probed or asked questions concerning relationships with the participants or with the potential readers of the text pushed our work in ways that helped us to clarify and to strengthen it. A red pen would have diminished our self-confidence, so important to self-study work (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). His reminders to maintain our voice and personal connection to the work energized the revision process.

Our mentor described work with doctoral students as a [more committed struggle than classroom teaching], one that also provides meaning for the mentor who is nurtured by [working with students who are working really hard and producing] (Jerry). This struggle provides the basis for the longer, more transformative process of self-study. Our mentor dealt with "dissonance, disappointments, and difficulties" experienced by group members, utilizing a psychodynamic process based on Gestalt psychotherapy. One particular paradoxical therapeutic move—physically reaching toward someone and figuratively holding someone's qualms for them—helped remove paralyzing anxiety that was keeping Mary Ellen blocked at one point in her work. When issues of methodology were confusing Liz, he returned her to basic questioning: "Why do you want to study

this? What do you want to find out?" He modeled this work with the group and we began to use it with each other as an act of focus and caring for each of the members as needed.

Second, our mentor insured that collaboration was implicit in the structure of our research. This included structuring collaboration with co-teachers and other participants. Our mentor required that we maintained relationships of mutuality and trust with the participants, guiding us to the kind of dynamic relationship which made writing the narratives authentic. Keeping this relationship primary forced Lis to rework her narratives so that the students could read them and see their story, and so that she was not colonizing their accounts. She had to change her original intention of "getting into their minds," to what was doable working with them.

Third, by creating a dissertation support group, our mentor brought another level to our collaboration. Our involvement in the support group gave us the opportunity to check each other's progress and to view interpretations from perspectives other than our own, increasing the rigor of our work. The collective was particularly useful for dissertation writing where the accepted isolation of the more traditional doctoral programs limits the intellectual and emotional possibilities. Caldwell (1998) notes the value of peer supports for female graduate students who are often marginalized in traditional networking arenas. She describes how the members of a female study group "created an authentic developmental group process which was supportive and rigorous. Their process provides a viable example of the emancipatory qualities of women's effective collaboration" (p. 59). We valued our dissertation group's collaboration during

the formulation of the research, in the writing process, and, most especially, when dealing with the academic strictures of the doctoral program.

Doctoral mentors often function as guides through the politics of the system, helping student-researchers maintain their confidence within systems difficult to navigate. All graduate mentoring involves a novitiate process (Adams, 1992; Baird, 1997; Gaffney, 1995; Manthei, 1992; Valadez & Duran, 1991). Self-study also requires a mentor committed to supporting a diversity of research methods within the politics of the institution. Lomax and Parker (1998) used collaborative self-study to examine and challenge some academic practices in the viva voce examination process. In their desire for a greater acceptance of a diversity of research methods, they questioned the typical patterns of power and suggested a more collaborative approach incorporating students' perspectives. They challenged the academic practices that legitimized a particular pattern of power.

Similarly, we were among the first graduate students to face a newly instituted Proposal Review Committee at Temple University. At the time, our commitment to qualitative methods increased our vulnerability before a committee well versed in quantitative methodologies. In fact, three of the four dissertation proposals were not accepted on their first submission. (Lis' defensiveness led her to overwrite her proposal, doubling the number of pages and references suggested by the committee's guidelines, finessing the acceptance of her submission). This anonymous review committee idiosyncratically red inked the texts for various, less than coherent or consistent, reasons. Our mentor played key roles here, both politically and personally. He called on the other professors and clarified the issues for us. He helped us process our disappointments,

empathized with us, helped us read the coded messages from the committee, and empowered us to finesse their concerns without giving up our focus.

Having to justify work that is meaningful to an individual, beyond the clarifying minimum, can create defensiveness and minimize the student's ability to proceed. The mentoring and the support group alleviated the defensiveness and allowed us to reframe the committee's criticism as an opportunity to clarify our work for a wider audience. From reviewing their comments collectively, we recognized their discomfort with qualitative work and recognized our responsibility to teach the committee. The educative relations ameliorated the vulnerability and empowered us to address the Dean of the Graduate School with our concerns. This led to a reexamination of the Committee's process. The educative relations deflected the political attacks by providing consistent, supportive feedback, rather than the sense that the rejections were personal criticism.

> Several studies show that both male and female students' satisfaction with doctoral programs, particularly with the dissertation experience, was directly related to satisfaction with advisement relationships. If, as this research indicated, the advisor-advisee relationship was the single most important element in graduate education, why was it so often perceived as the most disappointing relationship in many doctoral students' experiences. Although very little literature existed that examined the nature of these relationships, some experts believed that the answer might reside in the complex interplay between the demands of the cognitive task and the development of an interpersonal relationship between the advisor and advisee and that when the doctoral advisee

was a woman, the interpersonal dimension might assume greater importance. (Heinrich, p. 515).

As novices in self-study research, in a climate where a diversity of research methods is not readily accepted, the leadership of a strong mentor, one who can balance task and interpersonal issues, is particularly warranted. Our mentor's worry that our collaborative analysis might prove adulatory when he perceives himself [primarily as a facilitator...making a space for my students' self-development] points to a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1998) inherent in teaching and mentoring. Self-study mentoring facilitates student learning—meeting the students' needs to do their work and make it meaningful to themselves. Maybe self-study mentoring is what all teaching should be.

Concluding Discussion

Our original question was—what worked? What in our individual and collective processes led to the successful outcomes of timely completion of our degree requirements and the lived sense that the dissertation process was personally meaningful? We closely adhered to self-study methodology and used it to address this question. The process was engaging, energizing, and enlightening, reinforcing our commitment to involve ourselves in self-study practice and theory.

Repeatedly, the ideological assumptions and practice of narrative were consistent with self-study's ideological assumptions and practice. In a post-positivist, post-modern science, narrative's connection of art and science, of reflection to learning, of engaging subjectivity (rather than denying or demeaning self and voice) in research were

invaluable. Lomax concludes her paper about educative relations (1998) with the recognition that multiple forms of representation should be a feature of self-study because they "[invite] an audience to engage (inter-subjective dialectic) and [open] it up to ourselves (intra-subjective dialectic)" (p. 10). Of all the rhetorical writing strategies, narrative provides the best vehicle for the inscription, description, and communication of emotion. The Kingston Hill Research Papers that Lomax (1997) examined, with their varied forms of representation, are, in fact, all narrative. The narrative framework can provide self-study with the experiences of multiple other fields, including literature. Literary notions of form and content, and the variety of representations, can support and give direction to the emergent design of self-study representations.

We concur with Lomax's (1999) discussion of the importance of educative relations in self-study. In particular, our work identifies useful characteristics for mentoring relationships that support self-study work within doctoral programs. We believe that mentoring is especially significant for novices to self-study within an academic climate that is distrustful of qualitative and emergent designs (the diversity of research that Lomax and Parker (1998) refer to). The kind of mentoring we describe includes attention to intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics as a necessary part of self-study's ability to transform.

We engage in self-study to transform our practice. Even if the student researcher is not aware of the psychodynamic reasons for the choice of topic (perhaps, until years later), we discovered that when students select personally meaningful work, it nurtures personal growth. Thus, intensive self-study research has a therapeutic basis because it provides for authentic learning, self-development, reflection, insight, connection with

others, real world relevance, and practical application—what we have termed women's work. A benefit of this is increased self-confidence, certainly as important to a new Ph.D. as the credentials.

The self-study requirement for collaboration provides the expected results of checking data and interpretations, but also the unexpected rewards of catalyzing personal transformation. The process of checking interpretations implies reframing which when done in the context of a supportive community, provides benefits beyond the study's requirements. As our mentor noted about our collaboration, [there was something about the strengths that were tapped in each of you...that says something about the power of interaction which produces unexpected rewards] (Jerry).

If the goal of self-study research is transformed practice, then personal transformation is implied. Self-study's origins (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998) in teacher-educators wanting to make their practice consistent with their beliefs indicates the schism inherent when new knowledge is not, in and of itself, transformative. New knowledge can change one's beliefs but does not necessarily change one's practice. Coherently changing one's beliefs and practice involves a restructuring of self. Self-study methodology, where the self is brought in to the process at the deepest level, where collaborative and personal reflection on practice occurs (and where reframing results), nurtures personal growth and professional growth—and foments transformation.

Thus self-study is fundamental for authentic professional development and personal growth, distinctively different than "done to you in-service" models which are based solely on adding information and stirring, or mechanically exemplifying techniques that have worked for other practitioners. This authenticity may be because self-study

work owns up to the emotional context of the self. While acknowledging and working with this emotional context flies in the face of a traditional academic worldview, we believe it is the basis for authentic research and transformation.

We began our dissertation work believing that we were studying others (students and teachers), but when we applied the self-study framework, we could see that we were studying ourselves and gleaned insights from the process. The insights and the process were intertwined in transforming our practice. This power indicated to us that the self-study methodology could move beyond its originating use for teachers and teacher educators into a wider world. We would like to open the doors of self-study, as a vigorous and rigorous methodology, for anyone who wants to transform their professional practice.

References Cited

Achebe, C. (1990). Hopes and impediments: Selected essays. New York: Doubleday.

Adams, H. G. (1992). Mentoring: An essential factor in the doctoral process for minority students. National Consortium for Graduate Degrees for Minorities in Engineering, Inc.

Baird, L. L. (1997). Completing the dissertation: Theory, research, and practice. New Directions for Higher Education, 99, Fall 1997, Jossey-Bass.

Brodkey, L. (1992). Writing permitted in designated areas only. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minneapolis Press.

Caldwell, K. M. (1998). All that jazz talk: Possibilities for collaborative conversation in the college classroom. Transformations (9)1, pp. 57-67.

Cole, A. L., & Finley, S. (Eds.). (1998). Conversations in Community: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices. East Sussex, England.

Coles, R. (1989). The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. Educational Researcher (19)5, pp. 2-11.

Cortazzi, M. (1993). Narrative analysis. London: Falmer Press.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Empowering our Future in Teacher Education. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Self-study of Teacher Education Practices. (1996). East Sussex, England.

Gaffney, N. A. (Ed.). (1995). A conversation about mentoring: Trends and models. Council of Graduate Schools. (Document Reproduction Service No. ERIC ED 397 762)

Hamilton, M. L. (Ed.). (1998). Reconceptualizing teaching practice: Self-study in teacher education. London: Falmer Press.

Hamilton, M. L., & Pinnegar, S. (1998). Conclusions: The value and the promise of self-study. In M. L. Hamilton (Ed.), Reconceptualizing teaching practice: Self-study in teacher education. (pp. 235-246). London: Falmer Press.

Heinrich, K. T. (1991). Loving partnerships: Dealing with sexual attraction and power in doctoral advisement relationships. Journal of Higher Education, 62 (5), pp. 514-538.

Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data management and analysis methods. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research. (pp. 428-444). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Korb, M. P., Gorrell, J., & Van de Riet, V. (1989). Gestalt therapy: Practice and theory. New York: Pergamon Press.

Lomax, P. (Ed.). (1997). Kingston hill research papers I. Kingston Hill: Kingston University.

Lomax, P. (1998). Coming to a better understanding of educative relations through learning from individuals' representations of their action research. Paper presented at the meeting of the British Educational Research Association, Dublin.

Lomax, P., & Parker, Z. (1998, April). Using the M.Phil to Ph.D. transfer viva as a focus for the collaborative self-study of examining practices. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Loughran, J., & Northfield, J. (1998). A framework for the development of self-study practice. In M. L. Hamilton (Ed.), Reconceptualizing teaching practice: Self-study in teacher education. (pp. 7-18). London: Falmer Press.

Manthei, J. (1992, April). The mentor teacher as leader: The motives, characteristics and needs of seventy-three experienced teachers who seek a new leadership role. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research. (pp. 516-529). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

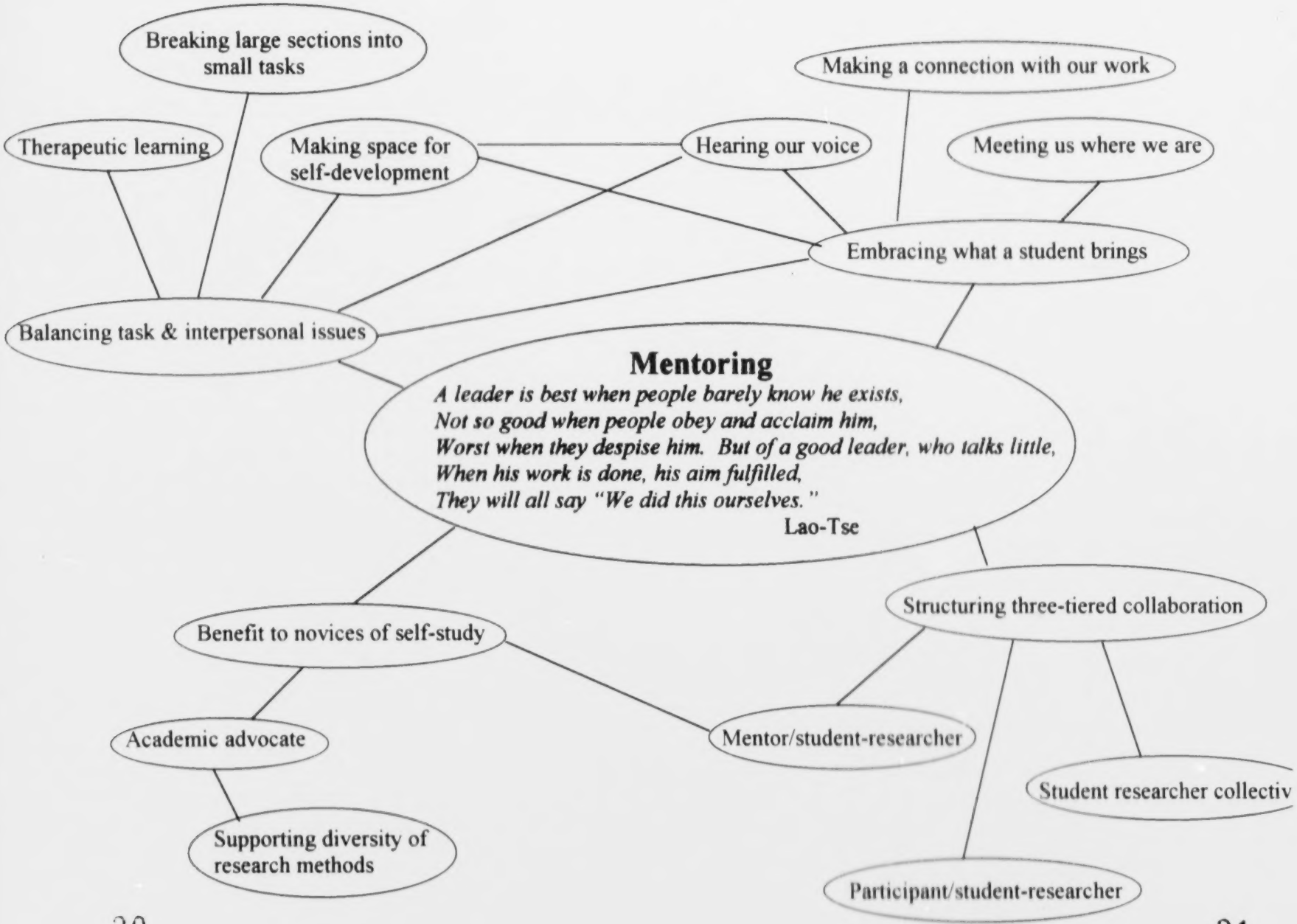
Richardson, L. (1997). Fields of play: Constructing an academic life. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

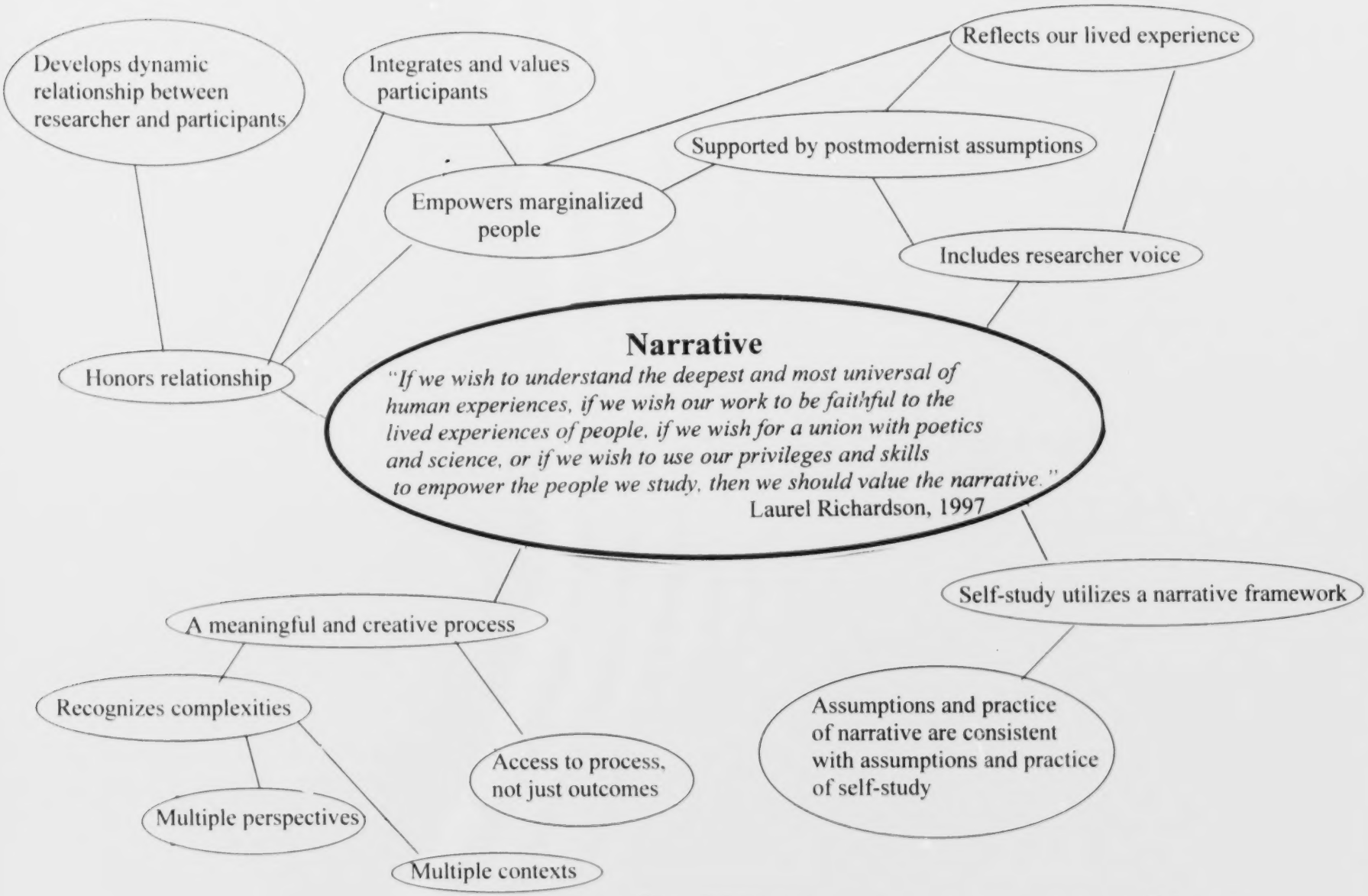
Russell, T., & Korthagen, F. (Eds.). (1995). Teachers who teach teachers: Reflections on teacher education. London: Falmer Press.

Shannon, A. G. (1995). Research degree supervision: More mentor than master. The Australian Universities' Review, 38 (2), pp. 12-15.

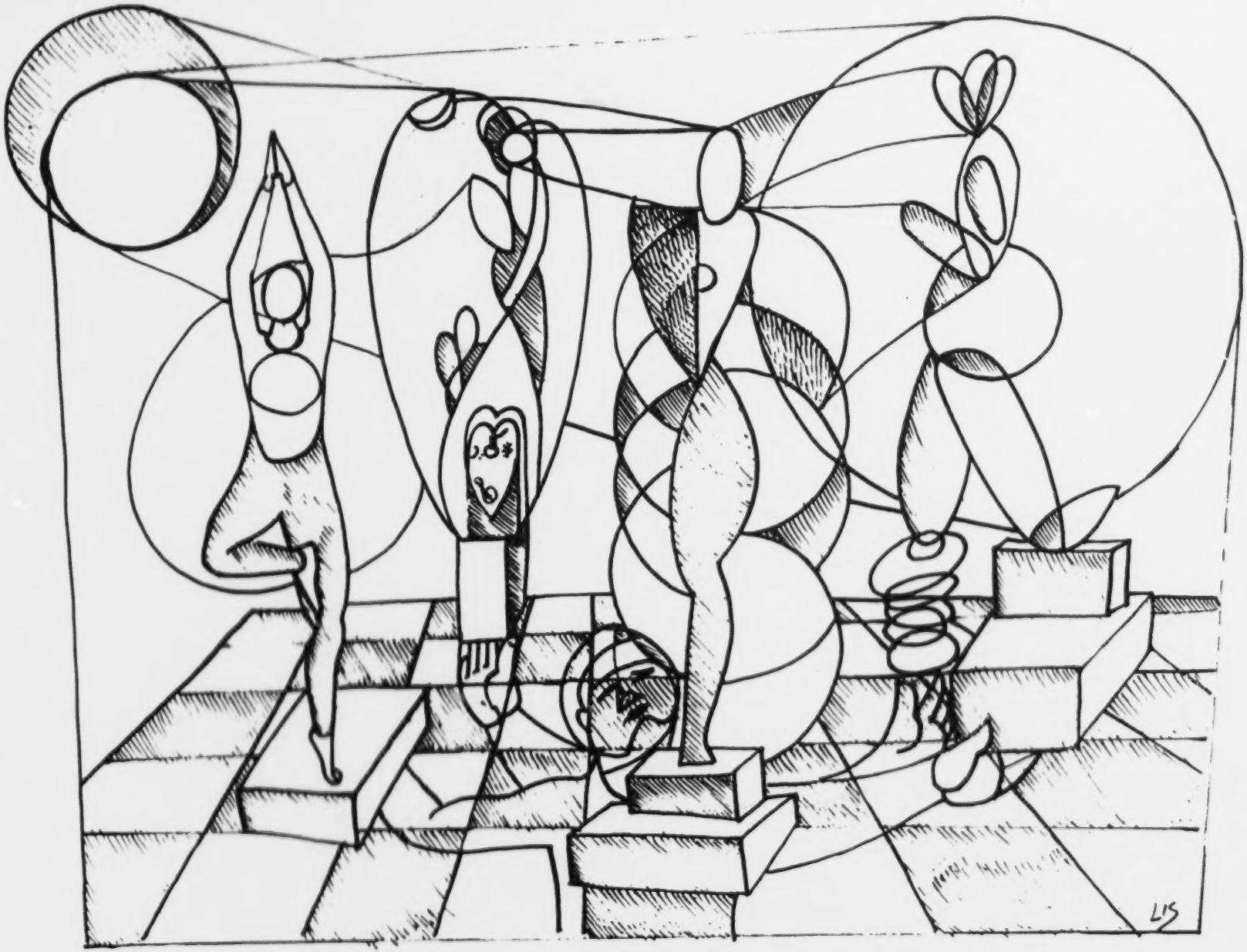
Valadez, J. R., & Duran, R. P. (1991, April). Mentoring in Higher Education. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Whitehead, J. (1998). How do I know that I influenced you for good? A question of representing my educative relationships with research students. In A. L. Cole and S. Finley (Eds.), Conversations in Community. Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the Self-study of Teacher Education Practices. (pp. 10-12). East Sussex, England.


Breaking large sections into small tasks
Making a connection with our work
Therapeutic learning
Making space for self-development
Hearing our voice
Meeting us where we are
Embracing what a student brings
Balancing task & interpersonal issues
Mentoring
A leader is best when people barely know he exists,
Not so good when people obey and acclaim him,
Worst when they despise him. But of a good leader, who talks little,
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,
They will all say "We did this ourselves."
Lao-Tse
Structuring three-tiered collaboration
Benefit to novices of self-study
Academic advocate
Mentor/student-researcher
Student researcher collectiv
Supporting diversity of research methods
Participant/student-researcher


Develops dynamic relationship between researcher and participants
Integrates and values participants
Reflects our lived experience
Supported by postmodernist assumptions
Empowers marginalized people
Includes researcher voice
Honors relationship
Narrative
"If we wish to understand the deepest and most universal of human experiences, if we wish our work to be faithful to the lived experiences of people, if we wish for a union with poetics and science, or if we wish to use our privileges and skills to empower the people we study, then we should value the narrative."
Laurel Richardson, 1997
Self-study utilizes a narrative framework
A meaningful and creative process
Recognizes complexities
Access to process, not just outcomes
Assumptions and practice of narrative are consistent with assumptions and practice of self-study
Multiple perspectives
Multiple contexts

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE